

A Divine Diagnosis of America

Preached by: Matthew S. Black

Text: Psalm 33

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Series: Civics & Nation

Theme and Text: Open your Bible to **Psalm 33**. We are asking the question this morning: “What is God’s Diagnosis of America?”

Our text in **Psalm 33:12** says very clearly, “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom He has chosen as his heritage!”

If a nation blesses God and serves makes circumstances favorable for true Christians, God will bless that nation. But there is also a warning.

Look at **Isaiah 60:12**, “For the nation and kingdom that will not serve you shall perish; those nations shall be utterly laid waste.”

As we are going to see in our text, God has a definite opinion of all nations. Nations will not stand before the judgment seat, so God deals with nations here and now. Through the Scriptures this morning, I want to give us all God’s diagnosis of America.

250 years ago, the David Patraus of the colonial days was George Washington. From what we can tell, he was a true, born again believer in Christ. One of the prayers from his handwritten journal reads as follows:

“I humbly beseech Thee to be merciful to me in the free pardon of my sins for the sake of Thy dear Son and only Savior Jesus Christ who came to call not the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Thou gavest Thy Son to die for me.”

—George Washington in a handwritten journal dated April 23, 1752

Can you imagine if our generals today were praying like this?

There is only one way in which the nation can know the blessing of God and that is as it seeks to serve the LORD. Other nations with rich spiritual heritages have fallen away from Christ. At one time Holland and England and Switzerland and France sent out great missionaries that shook the world for Christ. What are they doing now? They are cold.

The United States as a nation has turned away from the Lord. The Lord is merciful and long suffering. Though we do not deserve it, we still have much of the Lord’s blessing upon us, but we are beginning to feel His judgments.

Job says in **Job 12:23**, “He makes nations great, and he destroys them; he enlarges nations, and leads them away.”

David says in **Psalm 9:17**, “The wicked shall return to Sheol, all the nations that forget God.”

I want to consider three questions that will determine God’s diagnosis of us as a nation.

- I. **Do we as a Nation Rejoice in God’s Word?** No matter what happens in civil government, the joy of true believers is based on the Lord. Our joy and our praises and our worship services will go on in peace and unrest. Our joy and our happiness is based upon the eternal Word of God because it has a daily effect on our lives. Look at **verse 1**, “Shout for joy in the Lord, O you righteous! Praise befits the upright.” Why should we rejoice? Verse 4 gives the answer, “For the word of the Lord is upright!” Those who know the Lord and walk with Him in holiness have something to rejoice about! Listen to the Psalmist’s joy in **verses 2-3**, “Give thanks to the Lord with the lyre; make melody to him with the harp of ten strings! 3 Sing to him a new song; play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.”

Application: Do we as a nation rejoice that we have the Word of God?

Most Americans own a Bible. In fact, 92% of households in America own at least one copy. Of those households that own a Bible, the average number of Bibles is three. This includes not only the homes of practicing Christians but hundreds of thousands of atheists as well.¹

Yet the same study revealed that...

- Only half of adults interviewed nationwide could name any of the four Gospels of the New Testament.
- Just 37% of those interviewed could name all four Gospels.
- Only 42% of adults were able to name as many as five of the Ten Commandments correctly.
- Seven in ten (70%) were able to name the town where Jesus was born, but just 42% could identify him as the person who delivered the Sermon on the Mount

Are we a nation filled with people that rejoice in God and His Word? I don’t believe we are today, but we once were!

“What students would learn in American schools above all is the religion of Jesus Christ.”

—George Washington in a speech to the Delaware Indian Chiefs May 12, 1779

Washington said, “It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and Bible.”

- A. **We ought to Rejoice that we have God’s Word because it is Dependable.** You can base your whole life around God and His Word because He is totally faithful and trustworthy. Look at **verses 4-5**, “For the word of the Lord is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness. 5 He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord.”

The word “upright” (שׁר *yashar*) is defined by the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* as “right, level, pleasing [to God], morally right, straight, upright”. God’s Word is never crooked or twisted. It’s upright, straightforward. What God says is trustworthy and

¹ George Gallup, Jr., *The Role of the Bible in American Society* (Princeton: The Princeton Religion Research Center, 1990)

faithful. You can depend on what God says. It doesn't change. This is something to praise God about!

Notice how the psalmist describes God's people in verse 1, "upright". It is the same word! God's people are transformed into Christ's image by meditating on His Word.

Verse 5b, "the earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord". If you doubt God's Word being dependable, look around at all God's mercies. Look around, and see the sun, every day it comes up. The phrase "steadfast love" is the Hebrew word *hesed*. It is God's mercy or grace—it has the idea of His faithful promised love for His people that is based on His kindness and mercy. It is often equated with the New Testament concept of grace. "The heavens declare the glory of God!" They tell the story of our gracious God.

God's word is not only dependable, it is also powerful.

B. We ought to Rejoice that we have God's Word because it is *infinitely Powerful*. The same God who spoke to us this Bible, spoke in the same power and brought the worlds into existence.

6 By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host.
7 He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap; he puts the deeps in storehouses.

We cannot imagine the sheer infinite power that holds the worlds in place. Where does the energy for all life and all motion come from? It comes from Gods' infinite Word.

Application: Remember that this is not only the powerful Word that created the universe, it is the Word that revived our land. God has swept through our land many times in revival and His Word has shaken our whole continent! Think of the Great Awakening and the New York revival of the twentieth century. Thousands and hundreds of thousands were swept into the kingdom. Lives were transformed!

II. **Do we as a Nation Reverence the Lord? Verse 8, "Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him!"** God addresses each of us individually. One historian recently said, "'Societies...do not fall -- the individuals in them do'"²

Do we as a nation fear the Lord? Do we recognize that He is the Creator and Sustainer of all things? He calls "all the earth" to do this so no one is excluded. Do you today reverence the Lord? Does your entire life, your heart, mind and soul revolve around Him and endeavoring to please Him and love Him with every action and thought and word?

A. As a nation, we should Recognize God as the Creator of all things. Verse 9, "For He spoke, and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood firm". We no longer teach this in our classrooms. It is against the Law in most states to teach our children *Genesis 1* in our science classrooms. Do we reverence Him? Do we stand in awe of Him? Whether we allow this into

² Reb Bradley, *What's Happened to America?* Accessed 02 July 2008. LINK: http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=16149

our schools and into our government, He still no less our Creator. We ought to stand in awe of Him! Do we as a nation fear God? Walk into our classrooms.

Illustration: The New England Primer was used in public and private schools from 1690 to 1900 second only to the Bible. Consider some of its contents:

- A song of praise to God
- Prayers in Jesus' name
- The famous Bible alphabet with many references to the Gospel of Christ.
- Shorter Catechism of faith in Christ (in depth discussion of the Lord's prayer and the Ten Commandments).

B. As a nation, we should Recognize God as the Sustainer of all things. We as a nation must humbly make our plans with God's plans in mind. Today, we are making our legislation without at all considering what God thinks about it. We might be tempted to attribute our prosperity as a nation to all of our well thought out plans, and patents and genius that we are here. We are prosperous as a nation, because God has willed us to be prosperous, not because of our fantastic plans. Look at **verse 10**, "The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; He frustrates the plans of the peoples. 11 The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of His heart to all generations."

People make plans. But many of our plans our frustrated. They never come to pass. All of God's plans succeed. Nations who forget God in their plans will come to nothing. He will ultimately frustrate the plans of those who do not honor Him.

- God is involved in the affairs of all nations. **Psalm 67:4**, "Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. Selah".
- **Psalm 47:8** says it clearly, "God reigns over the nations; God sits on his holy throne."

Do we as a nation reverence God and consider Him in the plans we make?

Politicians cry out about all kinds of needs and give promises as to how they will change the status quo. Does America have politicians who fear and honor the Lord?

Can we say that God will bless America? Can we say that the United States is a nation whose God is the Lord? At one time we certainly could. Out of persecution, many of our brothers and sisters in Christ, the pilgrims and the Puritans fled here to worship God.

III. Do we as a Nation Receive the Lord's Blessing? Verse 12, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom He has chosen as his heritage!"

A. Let me say first, we have received the blessing of the Lord, because we have been a people that at our founding wanted to honor the Lord.

We have been supremely blessed by God. Our form of government has lasted for over 200 years. Russia, Italy, and France underwent revolutions about the same time we had our

American revolution, but all had very different results. France for instance are on their 7th different form of government since the French revolution. Italy is on it's 51st. We are still on our first. As we look at our history, we can say we have been blessed by the Lord.

It is because the founders of this nation purposely chose to be governed according to biblical principles. Consider the following.

1. At the Constitutional Convention of 1787, **James Madison** proposed the plan to divide the central government into three branches based on the model of government from the Perfect Governor from **Isaiah 33:22**:

“For the Lord is our **judge**;
the Lord is our **lawgiver**;
the Lord is our **king**; he will save us.”³

Our judicial, legislative, and executive branches purposely reflect the way God rules us as judge, lawgiver, and king.

2. From the **existing writings of the founding fathers** of our country, 34% of their quotations are direct quotes from the Bible! This was according to done by the University of Houston which assembled 15,000 writings from the founders, out of everyone they quoted, 34% were direct quotations from the Bible. 8% of the quotes were from William Blackstone, whose commentaries of Law were published in 1768. Blackstone believed that all law is based on God's divine Law. As you can imagine, Blackstone's commentaries are saturated with the Bible. Most of the founder's quotes of Blackstone are Blackstone referencing the Bible.
3. **John Jay**, the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and one of the three men most responsible for the US Constitution **insisted that Christians should be the ones elected to public office.**

He said this,

“Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers, and it is the duty, as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers”.⁴

4. What is the secret to America's greatness? I think **Alexis de Tocqueville** expressed it best in **1830**:

“Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits flame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power. **America is great**

³ Quote from the book *National Morality (Volume 1)* by Thomas D. Midgette (page 66), "At some point before or during the convention [Constitutional Convention of 1787], it is commonly reported that James Madison proposed the plan to divide the central government into three branches. It is commonly reported that it was as he read Isaiah 33:22 that he realized the importance and the wisdom of separating the power of government into three branches for he would have read, "For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king". The same information is found in *Taking Back the Good Book: How America Forgot the Bible and Why It Matters*, by Woodrow Kroll, page 41.

⁴ Quote from the official *House of Representatives Congressional Record*, page 21,336, September 5, 2003 quoting John Jay.

because America is good - And if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great.”

Are we a people that receives the blessing of the Lord? Over and over in our country, the leaders of our land upheld biblical principles in the courts, in the state and federal governments and in the executive branch.

B. So though we have received the Lord’s blessing, we are quickly losing it because God cannot ignore our rejection of Him.

13 The Lord looks down from heaven; he sees all the children of man;

14 from where he sits enthroned he looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth,

15 he who fashions the hearts of them all and observes all their deeds.

Today, our government does not want to follow the Word of God. The Lord “who fashions the hearts of them all and observes all their deeds” (**verse 15**). God is keeping our nation accountable.

- In 1962, we disallowed prayers in school. Bible reading was shortly after outlawed in our public schools.
- In September 4, 1969, our country introduced “no fault divorce” which has destroyed the fabric of God’s institution of the family.
- In 1973, we legalized abortion and have gone on to bring infanticide levels to 1.3 million babies aborted each year.

What have been the effects of in essence, rejecting the LORD as our God?

Today live in a country where pluralism is lifted up. We’ve set up as a virtue that having as many different religions and as many different philosophical systems and theological interpretations that you can have is the best. Pluralism, which is equality among conflicting ways of coming to God is heralded as the greatest virtue. It is something that is to be lifted high. The equal acknowledgement of all religions is come to be the protocol. So the government is seen as a-religious.

Look at **Isaiah 60:12**, “For the nation and kingdom that will not serve you shall perish; those nations shall be utterly laid waste.”

C. In fact, God’s blessing is currently being removed from our country.

1. Consider our schools. From the time the SATs came out in 1941, we scored the same until 1962-63. That year we have gone down consecutively in our SATs as a nation to lose 80 points. We are the first generation to be less intelligent than our parents!

SUPREME COURT - 1844 - VIDAL VS GIRARD

In 1844, a Philadelphia school wanted to teach morals without using the Bible. The Court said “Why may not the Bible, and especially the New Testament, be read and taught as a divine revelation in the schools? Where can the purest principals of morality be learned so clearly or perfectly as from the N.T.”

SUPREME COURT - 1892 - CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY VS U.S.

In another challenge the court ruled "Our laws and our institutions must necessarily be based upon and embody the teachings of the Redeemer of mankind, and it's impossible that it should be otherwise: and in this sense and to this extent our civilization and our institutions are emphatically Christian." The court also quoted 87 different historical precedents to back up its decision, from the Founding Fathers, Acts of the Founding Fathers, Acts of Congress, etc, etc.

2. Consider our ***families***. Sexually transmitted diseases in the last 50 years have gone up 500%.
 - After 1963 teen pregnancies increased 187% in the next 15 years.
 - For younger girls, ages 10 to 14 years, pregnancies since 1963 are up 553%.
 - Sexually transmitted diseases among students went up 226% in the next 12 years.
 - Divorces increased 300% ***each year*** for the next 15 years.
 - Unmarried people living together is up 353%
 - Single parent families are up 140%.
 - Single parent families with children are up 160%.

3. Consider our ***nation***.
 - Since 1963 violent crime has increased 544%.
 - The nation has been deprived of an estimated 50 million citizens through legal abortions just since 1973.
 - We are now bringing down the institution of marriage.
 - Our debt is so high that recently at the G20 summit our creditor nations are telling us we need to restructure our economy so we can repay them.

D. We are deceived to think that our prosperity comes from our military might.

16 The king is not saved by his great army; a warrior is not delivered by his great strength.

17 The war horse is a false hope for salvation, and by its great might it cannot rescue.

No matter how great our resources, victory belongs to the Lord. A king may have a mighty army and strong warriors; his horses may have great strength. But on the day of battle God alone decides who wins. And **God can make the stronger or the weaker win**—whichever his plan determines. **He has a thousand ways of making the weaker triumph over the stronger, and getting glory for His own name.**

IV. What Can We do as Christians to turn our country back to God.

Look at the actions God commands us to do in verses 18-20:

18 Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who **fear him, on those who **hope** in his steadfast love,**

19 that he may deliver their soul from death and keep them alive in famine.

20 Our soul **waits for the Lord; he is our help and our shield.**

21 For our heart is **glad in him, because we **trust** in his holy name.**

22 Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we **hope in you.**

2 Chronicles 7:14 said it this way, "if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

Conclusion: Since saying NO to Biblical principles AMERICA HAS BECOME A WORLD LEADER IN:

- DIVORCE
- TEENAGE PREGNANCIES
- VOLUNTARY ABORTIONS
- and it is the greatest consumer of ILLEGAL DRUGS

Is there hope? Our hope is in the Gospel of Jesus Christ that can change people's lives.

God's people have a joy that is not based on this passing world. We rejoice in Christ. Regardless of politics or country or nation, we are a blessed people. We are ultimately looking for another "city...whose designer and builder is God" (**Hebrews 11:10**).

Ultimately, this world is not our home. So we depend, not ultimately on the promises of politicians, but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ to change us!!